

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the present application, irrespective of whether the claim(s) remains under examination in the application are presented below. The claims are presented in ascending order and each includes one status identifier. Those claims not cancelled or withdrawn but amended by the current amendment utilize the following notations for amendment: 1. deleted matter is shown by strikethrough; and 2. added matter is shown by underlining.

1. (Original) A molded woody article comprising kenaf fibers and polylactic acid, wherein the molded article has an apparent density not greater than 0.7 g/cm^3 , and wherein bending strength of the molded article after the molded article is exposed to an environment of temperature of 50°C and 95% relative humidity for 1,200 hours is not less than 60% of bending strength of the molded article before exposure.

2. (Currently Amended) A method for manufacturing a molded woody article comprising the step of:

pressing a pre-molding material that is prepared by dispersing a polylactic acid-base aliphatic polyester and a compatible copolymer into kenaf fibers, the compatible copolymer containing a first polymerizable monomer and a second polymerizable monomer as raw materials, wherein the pressing step is performed at a temperature that permit the polylactic acid-base aliphatic polyester to be changed to a softened state or a molten state,

~~characterized in that~~ wherein the first polymerizable monomer has a polymerizable double bond part and a hydrophilic group, and

~~that~~ wherein the second polymerizable monomer has a polymerizable double bond part and an epoxy group.

3. (Original) The method for manufacturing a molded woody article defined in claim 2, wherein the first polymerizable monomer comprises an alkylene oxide group as the hydrophilic group.

4. (Currently Amended) The method for manufacturing a molded woody article defined in claim 2 [[or 3]], wherein a weight ratio of a sum of the first polymerizable monomer and the second polymerizable monomer to said polylactic acid-base aliphatic polyester is 0.1 to 10 wt%.

5. (Currently Amended) The method for manufacturing a molded woody article defined in ~~any of claims 2 to 4~~ claim 2, wherein the first polymerizable monomer comprises methoxypolyethylene glycol mono(meta) acrylate, and wherein the second polymerizable monomer comprises glycidyl (meta) acrylate.

6. (Currently Amended) The method for manufacturing a molded woody article defined in ~~any of claims 2 to 5~~ claim 2 comprising the step of applying the kenaf fibers with an aqueous dispersion of the polylactic acid-base aliphatic polyester and the compatible copolymer, thereby forming the pre-molding material.

7. (Currently Amended) The method for manufacturing a molded woody article defined in ~~any of claims 2 to 5~~ claim 2 comprising the step of mixing the kenaf fibers with binder fibers that contain the polylactic acid-base aliphatic polyester and the compatible copolymer, thereby forming the pre-molding material.